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SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

PHILADELPHIA MARKET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT *

December 15, 1939



A previous report on this project which covered the original market study, and the educational work prior to the formation of the Philadelphia Market Improvement Committee, was made on April 15, 1939. This committee was organized because of the feeling that major decisions as to improvements in the Philadelphia market should be made cooperatively by all groups properly interested and concerned. The committee is made up of 12 growers from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware; 10 members of the trade designated by the various groups in the trade; and 3 consumers representing different consumer groups in the city of Philadelphia. Mr. C. K. Hallowell, the Philadelphia county agricultural agent, was asked to serve as secretary to the committee, and representatives of the State colleges of agriculture and United States Department of Agriculture were requested to meet with the committee in an advisory capacity. This report covers the work of the committee during the past 8 months and other activities pertaining to developments in the Philadelphia market.

Committee meetings. - Since the formation of the Market Improvement Committee on March 30, 1939, it has met but once, on October 12, to consider the findings of a study on possible market sites. However, the executive committee, which was appointed by the larger group, has met several times during the year: April 28, May 23, June 27, November 10, and December 7. This smaller committee began a study on possible market sites and has been analyzing market authority legislation in operation and proposed for several of the larger cities in the East. At the meeting on December 7, a "model" illustrating a proposed program for improving the Dock Street area was studied by the committee.

It was recommended that at the next meeting of the entire committee, to be held in January 1940, two major questions be brought clearly before the group; First, where should the market be located; and, second, should a market authority be established to do the job? The "model" of the Dock Street area and plans for improving the market in that location would be presented as one definite plan for the committee to consider.

* This Summary has been prepared by L. M. Vaughan, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with R. B. Donaldson and C. K. Hallowell, Pennsylvania; K. R. Slamp and W. S. Moreland, New Jersey; and W. Calhoun and E. E. Gallahue, U. S. Department of Agriculture - a group representing the Federal and State Extension Services, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and the Consumers' Counsel.

Study of market sites. - At the executive committee meeting on June 27, to which the research representatives from the New Jersey and Pennsylvania State Colleges of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture were invited, a request was made for a study that would bring together information on several possible sites on which a complete wholesale fruit and vegetable market might be constructed. This study was made during the summer, and the results were reported to the entire committee on October 12. The findings are available in a joint publication of the United States Department of Agriculture, New Jersey College of Agriculture, and Pennsylvania State College, entitled "Information on Choosing a Site for the Development of a Complete Wholesale Produce Market in Philadelphia." This publication presents data on the assessed value of property in three different areas, plans for suggested layouts, and tentative cost figures for complete markets at the various sites. The Market Improvement Committee is now considering this report, along with other information that it has assembled, in an attempt to develop a definite program for improving conditions.

Publicity. - The Philadelphia newspapers have continued to publish information on conditions in the market and activities pertaining to it. A series of articles appeared during the summer based on information obtained from the trade, the growers, and the results of research studies. The findings from the study on market sites was widely published in the Philadelphia papers after the committee meeting where it was first released.

Philadelphia Fruit and Vegetable Terminals, Inc. - In accordance with the plans presented in the previous summary of activities on April 15, 1939, the above corporation leased platform "C" at the Pennsylvania Railroad terminal and subleased space to dealers, who proceeded to receive produce coming in by truck. It was a constructive attempt to relieve congested conditions in Dock Street during the period of heavy truck receipts. Because of dissension within the trade, the volume of business received did not warrant continuance of the ^{plan} lease for any length of time. This project did much, however, to bring the major issues involved in the improvement of the Philadelphia market before the various members of the trade.

A survey of wholesale buyers in Trenton, Camden, and Atlantic City was made by the New Jersey Extension Service to obtain information on the proposed truck market at the railroad terminals. This survey showed that practically every buyer was in favor of consolidating wholesale truck receipts with wholesale rail receipts at the terminal, and that the selling hours should be coordinated with those on Dock Street.

Later in the year, the dealers renting space on platform "C" decided to receive both rail and truck shipments on the platform, and this procedure largely removed the rail activities from platform "B" to "C."

Wholesale Marketing Improvement Association. This nonprofit corporation, whose aim is the betterment of marketing conditions in Philadelphia, has been active for several years in suggesting improvements to be made in the present Dock Street market. On December 7, it presented a program to

the executive committee for making changes in this market which included the widening of streets, store improvements, and the erection of some new buildings. The steps in the program were illustrated by pictures, blue prints, and a building and street "model" for the Dock Street area.

Present status of project. - In view of all the studies made and the discussions that have followed concerning the findings reported, most members of the committee feel that they should now initiate a definite program of action for improving the market over a period of years. Because of the importance of this project and the far-reaching effects of any program that is developed, the executive committee at its December 7 meeting felt that any plans proposed should have the support of a majority in the trade as well as the backing of growers' organizations and consumers in Philadelphia. Consequently, the present status of the project and the job immediately ahead center on the preparation of a definite program of action which can be submitted to the various organized groups for study and analysis. Out of these deliberations should come a program which can be jointly sponsored by all those properly interested and concerned with improvement of the Philadelphia Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market.

